

A Spotlight on collaboration

Part 1 of 5

An introduction to hybrid learning
“the ultimate team sport”



“Hybrid learning is turning teaching into the ultimate team sport.

Teachers can no longer do it alone. Individual players must use the skills and knowledge they possess to contribute to the larger team to ensure success for each and every student.”

Michael Earl, Principal Ōrākei School

As Michael Earl, principal of Ōrākei School, said so eloquently in the quote above, collaboration is essential to quality hybrid learning. Whether it is simply between two teachers or between schools, or clusters of schools, collaboration is essential if hybrid learning is to be sustainable.

This is the introduction to four spotlights, illustrating how schools worked collaboratively to support hybrid learning.

- » **In the first spotlight, two curriculum leads from Hawke’s Bay Tairāwhiti** share how weekly sessions to support hybrid learning have led to collaboration through an adaptable and flexible approach designed to promote collaboration.
- » **The second spotlight covers Sylvia Park School’s (SPS)** experience of collaboration. SPS organised a Think Tank to explore learnings about hybrid and remote learning.
- » **In the third spotlight, Ōrākei School** shares with us how the four schools of Te Roopu Pourewa Kāhui Ako are working together to provide a sustainable model of hybrid learning through a shared online learning programme for remote learners.
- » **And in the fourth and final spotlight, Ōtaki Kāpiti Collective** of schools shares how their collaborative networks and strong collaboration over many years supports the schools at all times, but even more so during the two years of the pandemic.

Many schools have talked about how the requirement to ensure continuous learning while students are both onsite and working remotely at the same time, has been very challenging. Collaboration has emerged as key to making this hybrid learning approach sustainable.

Huge thanks to these schools for so generously sharing their stories of collaboration with us.



Collaboration: What we can learn from the four spotlights

As you work your way through the spotlights, look out for the ways that they illustrate and reflect the important themes of collaboration identified below. Consider each spotlight, and ask yourself the reflective questions listed to help you develop some actions you might take to support more sustainable hybrid learning in your school or cluster of schools:

1. Collaboration isn't a nice to have, but is essential to developing sustainable approaches in complex and pressured times.
2. Collaboration doesn't just happen. It needs to be intentional and carefully planned for.
3. Collaboration emerges when space is created for it. It often starts with sharing of experiences, and when that sharing is nurtured and given space "to breathe", it can become collaboration.
4. Collaboration is more than a talkfest – but encourages deeper thinking, acknowledgement of diverse perspectives and embraces a call to action and change.
5. Collaboration requires light touch leadership that focuses on following more than leading. It requires leadership that continually seeks feedback and feedforward and is responsive to that feedback. It acknowledges that the power is with the group and leadership is in service to the group and its purposes.

Collaboration is best served by distributed or shared leadership as it recognises that everyone's strengths and contributions are needed by the group.

Reflective questions:

- » Have these stories prompted you to think about an area of practice that would benefit from collaboration? Who might you collaborate with? How might you go about setting up a space for collaboration?
- » How might you improve a collaborative situation you are already involved in? Is the leadership light touch? Are you making your best contribution to the collaboration? Are you taking responsibility even though you might not be leading it?
- » Are you creating spaces for collaboration? Do you let it "breathe"? Do you follow more than lead to allow it to emerge and then evolve? Are you responsive?

From the SPS Think Tank: Be fearless and radical in your thinking.